

**Statement of Letty Belin
Counselor to the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Before the Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans**

**H.R. 1219 – Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office
Conveyance Act of 2015
October 28, 2015**

Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Huffman and members of the Subcommittee, I am Letty Belin, Counselor to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. I am pleased to present the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on H.R. 1219, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Arbuckle Project (Project), Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District (District). For reasons I will discuss below, the Department supports this bill.

The Department has an active title transfer program and supports transferring certain Bureau of Reclamation project facilities to non-Federal entities, particularly in cases where transfers could create opportunities, not just for those who receive title, but for other stakeholders and the public as well.

The Arbuckle Project was authorized by the Act of August 24, 1962, Public Law 87-594 for municipal water supply, flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife purposes. The Project was completed in 1966 and consists of Arbuckle Dam, Lake of the Arbuckles, and the Wynnewood Pumping Plant and Aqueduct.

Section 2(c) of the original authorizing language allowed for conveyance of title to pipelines and related facilities used solely for delivering project water to water users upon completion of their repayment. The District fulfilled its repayment obligation to the United States in September 2012, and Reclamation transferred title to the water conveyance facilities which consisted of the Wynnewood Pumping Plant and Aqueduct in December 2012.

As Reclamation was preparing to transfer title of the water conveyance facilities, the District requested that the Arbuckle Maintenance Complex and District Office be included in the title transfer. Reclamation determined that because these facilities were not used “solely for the purpose of delivering project water to the water users” there was not sufficient authority to accommodate this request. H.R. 1219 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the District all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Maintenance Complex and District Office.

The Department supports this legislation because transferring the Maintenance Complex and District Office would relieve Reclamation of all future liability and financial responsibility for operation and maintenance of the facilities.

This concludes my written statement. I am pleased to answer any questions at the appropriate time.